



honor your Self

HONOR

“REALLY UNDERSTAND HOW SPECIAL AND TALENTED AND POWERFUL YOU ARE AND HOW MUCH THE WORLD NEEDS YOU.”

Dyani Bingham is a self-professed “child of Montana.” She was born here, has family all over the state, and never wants to leave. Dyani currently holds three jobs in Helena, all of which fulfill her quest to “stay in Montana and help the tribe in any way I can.” In her first position she makes sure that American Indians in Montana have access to what they need to stay healthy. In her second, she does youth advocacy work to help reservation and urban Indian youth get the skills they need to avoid commercial tobacco and respect traditional tobacco. In her third job, Dyani helps American Indians gain access to the professional development that they need to be successful in the art marketplace. “They are all three pretty different,” she says, “but I see them as being all connected in a holistic way.”

“There’s no hierarchy to the issues in Indian Country,” she says. “They are all connected. Whatever you are passionate about, you can find a way to work on it and make things better for your community.” It’s all about taking opportunities, she says. “I put my best foot forward and make relationships with people and try to learn as much as I can from others.” She’s learned a lot from her education and her jobs, but even more from elders and from her dad, who taught her that you have to be able to fight for what you believe in. Her role models, she says, “are people who are not afraid to express themselves – people who can confront hard issues and have everyone come out for the better.”

Dyani believes that everyone can be an agent for social change, especially those in her own community. “How can we work to gain success in Indian Country that doesn’t necessarily look like success in the white world but more like how we want it to look in Indian Country?” she asks. “It doesn’t have to do with money all the time – spiritually, socially, culturally and physically. We can share that with our children and the entire state. Because I think a lot of the values of Indian Country are lacking in the mainstream world. They could really learn from us.”

“I UNDERSTAND WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND TO GET INTO TROUBLE AND TO HAVE A LOT OF OBSTACLES THAT ARE EMOTIONALLY AND MAYBE EVEN SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSING TO YOU. BUT EDUCATION IS A WAY OUT OF THAT BECAUSE THE MORE YOU READ ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES AND THE MORE YOU PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD, THE MORE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE ABOUT YOUR PLACE IN IT.”



Dyani Bingham 33
Ft. Belknap Assiniboine
Capital High School
Montana State University - Billings
Advocate and Program Planner
for American Indian Arts and Health



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